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England Emphasizes Importance of Internal Checks

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29, 2007 – Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England donned a Santa hat today to remind Defense Department managers to take the red-suited fellow's lead by checking their lists twice to enforce internal controls within the department.

Internal controls are critical as DoD manages a budget of more than \$500 billion, not including war costs, England told attendees at the Manager's Internal Control Program and Check-It Campaign Conference at Fort McNair here.

The way the department enforces its internal controls has a direct impact on the men and women in uniform defending the United States and its friends and allies, England said. "We are the people behind the lines, and we make it possible for our men and women who serve on the front lines ... to do their jobs. They count on us every single day. They count on us doing this job, and they count on us doing it right.

"And we know that we do it right when we check it every day," he said.

England pointed to DoD's "Check-It" program, which he kicked off in July 2006, as a key to that goal. The campaign aims to remind everyone throughout DoD of the importance of their jobs to the overall mission and of double-checking themselves to make sure they're doing them right and not cutting corners.



Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England dons a Santa hat Nov. 29, 2007, to remind managers at the Defense Department Manager's Internal Control Program and Check-It Campaign Conference at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., to check their lists twice to enforce internal controls within the department. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly A. Burgess, USN
(Click photo for screen-resolution image); [high-resolution image](#) available.

"If you check things, then what should happen will happen," England said in introducing the program. "It's what we want to do every day in the jobs we do."

That has big implications for the military, where "getting it right" is the only real option, he said.

Tina Jonas, DoD's comptroller, said the Check It program is paying off through greater return on investments, hundreds of millions of dollars in savings and governmentwide recognition of the department's accomplishments. "You are the ones who are making it happen," she told the managers.

She noted an 84 percent reduction in self-identified internal control weaknesses since 2001 – from 116 to 19 today. "That's progress," she said.

Jonas also pointed to other measures of this forward momentum. She noted that in 2001, only two DoD entities had achieved a clean audit opinion on their financial statements. By 2006, that number had increased to six.

The department's goal is to bring two-thirds of its entities to this standard by fiscal 2009, she said.

England thanked defense managers for the hard work that's brought about this progress and challenged them to get the remaining 19 internal control weaknesses cleared up before he leaves office in 417 days. "I ask for your energy and support," he said. "What you do is vitally important to the Department of Defense."

Biographies:

[Gordon England](#)

[Tina W. Jonas](#)



Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England urges attendees at the Manager's Internal Control Program and Check-It Campaign Conference on Nov. 29, 2007, to continue progress in promoting internal controls within the Defense Department. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly A. Burgess, USN

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Tina Jonas, DoD's comptroller, tells attendees at the Manager's Internal Control Program and Check-It Campaign Conference at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., the Defense Department's efforts are paying off through greater return on investments and hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly A. Burgess, USN

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